

VZCZCXRO0721
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #3560 2370803
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 250803Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2643
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9407
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OSD/ISA/AP// IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 003560

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MTS
USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO
JOINT STAFF J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMONS)
OSD/ISA/AP (LAWLESS/TOOLAN/BAILEY)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER MOPS MCAP PREL RP

SUBJECT: AUGUST 25 UPDATE ON JOLO OPERATIONS

REF: A. MANILA 3401

- 1B. MANILA 3352
- 1C. MANILA 3299
- 1D. MANILA 3218

11. (SBU) "Operation Ultimatum," the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) effort to capture or kill senior Abu Sayyaf (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) leaders on the island of Jolo, is now in its 25th day. The AFP remains determined to maintain the pressure on the fugitive terrorists, who appear to be located in the vicinity of Patikul in central Jolo. On August 23, Scout Rangers patrolling the area ran into heavy resistance and suffered 14 wounded and two killed.

The AFP responded with artillery and mortar fire and OV-10 and helicopter gunship strikes, and continues to hit ASG/JI targets once they are identified. Several terrorists are reported killed, although the actual number casualties is still unclear and there is no confirmation of their identity.

The Philippine Navy is maintaining a tight maritime cordon around the island, stopping on average 50 vessels per day.

12. (SBU) U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines troops assisted an August 24 AFP medical civic action mission in Indianan that treated 50 people. Soldiers distributed medical supplies and scheduled appointments for follow-on surgery. A ribbon cutting for an Area Coordination Center servicing the Indianan area will take place on August 30. Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) refugees in the No-Fire Area north of Mount Tumatangis are receiving supplies and water. According to sources, the local MNLF leadership continues to exercise restraint and has kept its fighters out of the conflict.

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Jones